GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1821
ANSWERED ON:11.12.2008
THEFT OF ANTIQUES
Nandy Shri Amitava

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether large scale thefts of Indian antiques are taking place in ancient temples and far flung villages of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise during the last three years and the current year; and

(c) the action taken to trace and bring back the stolen antiques ?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a)&(b) Details of available data relating to theft in last three years are enclosed at Annexure I. This is not indicative of any regular pattern.

(c) The Archaeological Survey of India is committed towards the preservation and safety of antiquities at the protected monuments as well as the site museums.To ensure their safety, the Archaeological Survey of India engages security guards whose strength has been augmented by deploying private security guards, State police, home guards, and the CISF at selected monuments. Constant interaction takes place between ASI, CBI and Customs authorities to share information on the smuggling of art objects.Provisions exist under the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 for regulation of export in antiquities and art treasures and for prevention of their illicit trafficking. These provisions include registration of dealers,registration of specified categories of antiquities, prosecution of offenders etc.The Government has launched a National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities which will, among other things,document the country's monuments and antiquities.